

*From the Fall 2000 Newsletter*

## **SPOTLIGHT ON EVENTS**

### **National Center for Ethics Sponsors National Training Conference**

*Intensive Ethics Training: Practical Knowledge and Skills for an Effective Ethics Program*

*Co-sponsored by the Employee Education System (EES) and the National Center for Ethics  
Park City, Utah*

*On July 24 - 28, 2000 the National Center for Ethics and the Employee Education System (EES) sponsored Intensive Ethics Training: Practical Knowledge and Skills for an Effective Ethics Program in Park City, Utah. Throughout VHA, ethics programs serve an essential function by helping to clarify and promote ethical health practices. The five-day course provided a select group of ethics program participants, including members of Ethics Advisory Committees, clinicians, compliance officers, attorneys and VHA leaders with specialized knowledge and skills needed to develop an integrated ethics program.*

### **VISN 11 Holds Ethics Workshop for Executives and Members of Ethics Advisory Committees**

*On March 29-30, 2000, VISN 11 (Ann Arbor) sponsored a program prepared by the Employee Education System (EES) and the National Center for Ethics entitled "Organizational Ethics in VHA." Designed for executives and ethics advisory committee members, the workshop provided an opportunity to explore practical strategies for addressing organizational ethics issues faced by network staff. This two-day event was held at the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center, Detroit MI, and was attended by 74 people. The principal presenters were William A. Nelson, Ph.D. (Ethics Education Coordinator for the National Center for Ethics) and Susan D. Goold, M.D. of the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center (Associate Director for Ethics and Health Policy at the Program in Society and Medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School).*

*Feedback from participants was uniformly positive. In a letter to employees within the VISN, Linda Belton, Network Director of VISN 11, wrote "One of the points made clear at the conference was that right or wrong answers are not always so obvious ... Those of us who were looking for a halo around 'clinical perspectives' or a pitchfork next to 'administrative perspectives' - or vice versa - were disappointed. Instead, as one speaker stated, there is a need to situate individual acts in health care to an organizational context, integrating clinical and organizational ethics."*

### **VHA National Ethics Committee Holds Biannual Meeting**

*On May 24-25, 2000, the VHA's National Ethics Committee held its biannual meeting in Washington, DC. The Committee Chair is Arthur R. Derse, M.D., J.D.*

*(Associate Director for Medical And Legal Affairs at the Medical College of Wisconsin), who also Co-Chairs the Ethics Advisory Committee at VAMC Milwaukee, WI. The business conducted included the following:*

- *welcoming Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D. (Acting Under Secretary for Health), who addressed the Committee and entertained questions;*
- *introducing the Committee's newest member, Michael Cantor, MD, JD, a geriatrician who serves as Special Assistant to the Director of the National Center for Ethics;*
- *reviewing the Committee's new [charter](#);*
- *discussing several National Ethics Committee reports that are currently under development;*
- *finalizing plans to empanel a new Task Force to address "Ethnic and Gender Disparity in Health Care."*

*The next meeting of the VHA National Ethics Committee is scheduled for Washington, DC, on November 29-30, 2000.*

### ***VISN 3 Hosts Ethics Conference in September***

*In cooperation with the Employee Education System (EES) and the National Center for Ethics, VISN 3 will sponsor a conference on organizational ethics on September 14, 2000. The conference will be held on the New York campus of the VA New York Harbor Health Care System. The agenda includes plenary, panel, and break-out sessions on practical topics such as:*

- *the role of ethics in a changing health care environment;*
- *reconciling diverse interests of patients, clinicians, and managers;*
- *allocating and rationing limited resources; and*
- *developing integrated ethics initiatives at the facility level.*

*Nationally recognized speakers Clarence Braddock, M.D., M.P.H., James Sabin, M.D., and William Nelson, Ph.D. will give talks and moderate discussions. For more information or to register, please contact Virginia Cole, Education Specialist, Northport VAMC, (631) 754-7914, Extension 7457.*